

REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH,
CLEVEDON URBAN DISTRICT, FOR THE YEAR 1938.



Mr. Chairman, Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit my report for the year 1938, including a summary of parts of your Sanitary Inspector's Report for the same period.

General Provisions of Health Services.

G. Macleod, M.A., M.D., D.P.H.

M.O.H. (part-time)

I.J. Leach, A.R.S.I., M.S.I.A., F.I.A.S., Sanitary Inspector and Surveyor.

Alan S. Chubb, A.I.A.S.

Ass. San. Inspector and Shop Inspector.

The conclusion of an agreement with the Bristol Corporation for the reception of Infectious Diseases has happily preceded an outbreak of the worst epidemic of Diphtheria the town has ever known, and it is gratifying to report upon the prompt way all cases were removed to Ham Green Hospital and treated there. The facilities for having throat swabs from doubtful cases examined by the Bristol Health Authority have also proved a great convenience.

Statistics and Social Conditions in the Area.

Area (in acres): 3292.

No. of inhabited houses: 2545.

Rateable value and sum represented by penny rate: £72551;
 £283.15/-.

Registrar-General's estimate of resident population, mid-1938: 7754.

	Total	M.	F.	
Live (Legitimate Births)	91	48	43	} Birth rate per 1000 of estimated resident population 12.38
(Illegitimate)	-	-	-	
Stillbirths	5	3	2	Rate per 1000 total (live & still) births 52
Deaths	135	57	78	Death rate per 1000 of estimated resident population 10.97

Av. age at death 68.86 years.

Deaths from puerperal causes:

	Deaths	Rate per 1000 total (live and still) births.
No. 29 Puerperal sepsis	Nil	-
No. 30 Other puerperal causes	Nil	-
Total	Nil	-



Statistics and Social Conditions (continued).

Death Rate of Infants under one year of age:-

All infants per 1000 live births	54.94
Legitimate infants per 1000 legitimate live births	54.94
Illegitimate infants per 1000 illegitimate live births	Nil.
<u>Deaths from Cancer</u> (all ages)	25
<u>Deaths from Measles</u> (all ages)	2
<u>Deaths from Whooping Cough</u> (all ages)	Nil
<u>Deaths from Diarrhoea</u> (under 2 years of age)	Nil

Sanitary Circumstances in the Area.

(i) Water. The quantity and quality of the water supply is the constant care of the Company which supplies the town, and it is well that the public should know that measures are always in readiness to ensure the safety of the water supply, should evidence of suspected contamination come to light at any time. In this connection, the Company are alive to the building extension which is taking place in the rural area adjoining the water supply.

(ii) Drainage and Sewerage. No important extension has been made to the system, but I would again stress the necessity of estimating the capacity of the existing sewer before further additions to its load are permitted on new building estates.

(iii) The small local river was well flushed during the wet summer, but in the mild warm autumn when diphtheria prevailed, flies were in evidence, and the majority of cases seem to have been grouped around the open waterways.

Closet Accommodation. The question of the servicing of cess-pits is at present under consideration by the Council.

(iv) Unfortunately it is still necessary to record the removal of house refuse in open or semi-open lorries during the daytime.

Summary of Sanitary Inspections etc.

Drains tested	46
Drains found defective	18
Drains repaired or altered	14
Closets inspected having no flushes	62
Flushes fixed since inspections	31
Sinks fixed	18
New drains inspected and tested	35
Cesspits condemned	4
New cesspits constructed	3
General nuisance abated	54
Rooms disinfected	42
Fumigation of bedding, clothes, etc.	42

Camping Sites.

- (1) No. of sites in the area which were used for camping purposes during 1938 ... 9
- (2) No. of camping sites in respect of which licences have been issued by L.A. under Section 269 of the Public Health Act 1936. 9
- (3) Estimated maximum no. of campers resident in the area at one time during the summer season, 1938 ... 350 (approx).

Smoke Abatement. No action has been taken during the year for the abatement of smoke nuisance.

Swimming Pool. I hope that the concreting of the bottom of the lake will lead to an improvement in bathing facilities.

Eradication of Bed Bugs. No action has been necessary.

Schools. These have been regularly inspected, and in the case of some of the older buildings attention has again been drawn to the absence of individual flushes to their W.C.'s.

When examining children during the diphtheria epidemic I was particularly struck by the tired appearance of some of the older children. This would appear to be due to insufficient rest, while the bad teeth and furred tongues would point to improper dietary and irregular habits. Cheap gaudy-coloured cakes, etc. appear to form too large a proportion of the dietary, and it was instructive to contrast these children of the general population with a group of children from a local institution, who looked alert, happy, well-coloured and well-nourished, conditions which are obtained on a necessarily strictly economic basis.

Housing.

There is still a demand for new houses, chiefly from those living in basement flats, which in spite of efforts at considerable expense to render these habitable, frequently prove to be intractably damp, as there has never been a proper damp-proof course in the walls, and the configuration of the surrounding ground is such as to maintain the walls in a state of dampness. Lining these walls with asbestos sheeting is no cure for dampness, and new tenants soon find that these dwellings are unsatisfactory.

1. Inspection of Dwelling-houses during the Year:-

- (1) (a) Total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts) ... 70
- (b) Number of inspections made for the purpose ... 35
- (2) (a) Number of dwelling-houses (included under sub-head (1) above) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925 and 1932 ... 39
- (b) Number of inspections made for the purpose ... 20

- (3) Number of dwelling houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation ... 6
- (4) Number of dwelling houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation ... 40
2. Remedy of Defects during the Year without service of formal Notices:-
- Number of defective dwelling houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their officers ... 8
3. Action under Statutory Powers during the Year:-
- (a) Proceedings under sections 9, 10, and 16 of the Housing Act, 1936:
- (1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs 40
- (2) Number of dwelling houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices:
- (a) By owners ... 32
- (b) By Local Authority in default of owners ... Nil
- (b) Proceedings under Public Health Acts:
- (1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied ... 20
- (2) Number of dwelling houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices:
- (a) By owners 20
- (b) By Local Authority in default of owners Nil
- (c) Proceedings under sections 11 and 13 of the Housing Act, 1936:
- (1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made 6
- (2) Number of dwelling houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders 3
- (d) Proceedings under Section 12 of the Housing Act, 1936:
- (1) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were made 5
- (2) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the tenement or room having been rendered fit 2



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2017 with funding from
Wellcome Library

<https://archive.org/details/b29115140>

4. Housing Act, 1936. Part IV. Overcrowding:-

(a)	(i)	Number of dwellings overcrowded at the end of the year	8
	(ii)	Number of families dwelling therein	10
	(iii)	Number of persons dwelling therein	64
(b)		Number of new cases of overcrowding reported during the year	1
(c)	(i)	Number of cases of overcrowding relieved during the year	2
	(ii)	Number of persons concerned in such cases	10
(d)		Particulars of any cases in which dwelling houses have again become overcrowded after the Local Authority have taken steps for the abatement of overcrowding	Nil
		Rehousing by L.A. 1936 Act ...	8
		" " Others ...	51 new houses.

Inspection and Supervision of Food.

Samples of milk are regularly submitted for examination, and are generally found to be satisfactory, while other articles of food are under constant supervision, and have been found to be satisfactory.

CARCASSES INSPECTED AND CONDEMNED.

	Cattle, excluding Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs
Number killed (if known)	268		176	1877	499
Number inspected	268		176	1877	499
<u>All Diseases except Tuberculosis</u> Whole carcasses condemned				1	2
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned	3				
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than tuberculo- sis	.011			.0005	.004

CARCASES INSPECTED AND CONDEMNED (continued).

	Cattle, excluding Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs
<u>Tuberculosis only</u> Whole carcasses condemned	2				2
Carcases of which some part or organ was con- demned					
Percentage of the number inspected affected with tuberculosis	.007				.004

Prevalence of and Control over Infectious Diseases.

Two cases of diphtheria were notified at the end of September, one of whom might have contracted infection during a visit to Bristol, but the second had not been exposed to any known infection. During October nineteen cases were notified, and in November eleven further cases occurred. The outbreak was confined mainly to the lower part of the town, and few of the cases had any direct relationship one to another, nor to any discoverable common source of infection. Milk and food supplies revealed no common ground of possible infection, and the school milk supplies were examined with negative results, while the men who delivered the milk were also swabbed and found to be negative. Teachers at the schools were also examined with negative results, and all children attending the schools were examined on several occasions. Sunday schools and schools were closed from 23rd October till 14th November when, out of a number of suspects, five positive nasal cases were discovered and isolated, and on November 21st one further nasal case was discovered and isolated, while on November 25th all those attending schools were apparently free from suspicion.

Of these six nasal cases, two were probably genuine carriers; one who had been in hospital in Bristol in 1937 for fifteen weeks, and had his tonsils and adenoids removed in an effort to free his throat from infection; and the other who had been discovered as a carrier during the outbreak here in 1936. The remaining four cases were regarded as recent nasal infections of a mild clinical type.

As these cases were distributed over all the Elementary Schools, and having regard to the number of nasal infections, it was thought desirable to forbid the use of common roller towels for the use of the children in these schools, as these probably helped to spread this infection and also impetigo. In December only two further cases of a mild type occurred.

One case occurred in a woman aged 61, who probably contracted infection through attending to visitors as a waitress in a local cafe. She was satisfactorily isolated at home.

Contacts were swabbed after removal of all cases from their homes, and very few secondary cases developed which could be traced to infection in the homes; indeed, some secondary cases occurred some weeks after the removal of a primary case and disinfection of the home. After the subsidence of the epidemic two cases of mild palatal paralysis were discovered, both of whom - a boy of 10 and a girl of 18 - had had mild sore throat, but swabs from whom were reported negative both at the beginning of their illness and during convalescence.

It would appear that the epidemic developed from the entry of infection into a community which was susceptible, and at a time when mild weather seems to have favoured its rapid spread. Case-to-case infection by anything approaching direct contact was singularly absent, and the outbreak subsided almost as dramatically as it began. Upwards of 150 contacts were swabbed during the course of the epidemic, and I have pleasure in acknowledging my indebtedness to the County Authorities for the help they have given me in dealing with this outbreak.

I have to acknowledge with thanks the help I received from my professional colleagues, from School Teachers and Clergy, and from the Bristol Sanitary Authorities for the prompt way in which all cases were removed.

Artificial Immunisation.

I am glad that immunisation against diphtheria of school children in the town has proceeded fairly satisfactorily, and I hope that during the summer further immunisation of the younger children will also be prosecuted, and that those who missed immunisation through absence will be dealt with during the autumn.

Statistics and local Social Conditions.

As appears from an analysis of the vital statistics, the population still maintains a large proportion of old people and the average age at death is relatively high.

In January we had some mild cases of dysentery, and from February to April a considerable number of cases of measles, two of which proved fatal. Whooping cough accompanied the outbreak and added to its risks. Influenza of a mild type was also experienced, and then we had a wonderful month of sunshine in March which was unfortunately followed by cold, sunless and wet weather, during which pneumonias continued to crop up, even into July. The poor summer was followed by a mild autumn in which diphtheria visited the town in a rather virulent form. This is commented upon under the Section devoted to Infectious Diseases.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES DURING THE YEAR 1938.

Disease	Total Cases Notified	Cases ad- mitted to Hospital	Total Deaths
Smallpox	-	-	-
Scarlet Fever	-	-	-
Diphtheria	33	32	1
Enteric Fever (incl. Paratyphoid)	-	-	-
Puerperal Fever	-	-	-
Puerperal Pyrexia	-	-	-
Pneumonia	16	-	4
Other Diseases generally	-	-	-
notifiable Erysipelas	1	-	-
Other Diseases notifiable locally-	-	-	-

TUBERCULOSIS.

New Cases and Mortality during 1938.

Age Periods	New Cases				Deaths			
	Respiratory		Non-Resp.		Respiratory		Non-Resp.	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
0 -	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1 -	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5 -	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15 -	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
25 -	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-
35 -	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
45 -	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
55 -	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
65 and up- wards	1	-	-	-	1	1	-	-
Totals	5	-	-	1	2	1	-	-

It gives me pleasure to acknowledge once again the constant help afforded me by all of the various officials, and by the Chairman and members of the several Committees.

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient Servant,

G. Macleod.

25th May, 1939.

